

*Duplicate*  
EIGHTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOSTON ACADEMY OF MUSIC,

ADOPTED AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING, IN THE ODEON,

JULY 15, 1840.

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# GOVERNMENT OF THE ACADEMY.

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## R E P O R T .

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THE last year has been a very eventful one in the history of the Academy, singularly diversified with good and ill, with success and disappointment. It would not be proper now to go minutely into a detail of all the circumstances which have given importance to the transactions of the past year; yet some brief and general retrospect of them is necessary in order to the right understanding of the present position of the Academy.

The intention of the government was to have commenced a series of concerts early in the autumn of 1839, and the rehearsals of the choir, and all other necessary preparations were in proper train, when they were suddenly terminated, and the concerts postponed, in consequence of a disagreement between two of the professors, which, after long negotiation, resulted in the resignation by Mr. Webb of the office he had filled from an early period after the first establishment of the Academy, with honor to himself, and the institution, to the acceptance of the government, and the satisfaction of that portion of the public who honored our concerts by attendance. Deeply as the government regretted this event, and earnestly as some of them had labored to prevent it, they yet saw, under present circumstances, no alternative preferable, on the whole, to accepting it. They therefore, though with great reluctance, and with a full appreciation of Mr. Webb's talents and adaptation by his personal qualities to promote the ob-

jects they had in view, thought it best to accede to his proposition, and to endeavor to supply his place as well as they were able.

Upon inquiry for the most suitable person to take the vacant seat, the reputation of Mr. F. F. Müller, then of Cincinnati, appeared to give him strong claims upon the attention of the government, and proposals were accordingly made to him, to come to Boston, and try whether the situation would be acceptable to him, and if it were probable that his labors would be useful in the Academy. He accepted the proposition, and has acted as organist at the rehearsals of the winter, and the concerts which were given in the spring. The evidence of the musical talent and acquirement of Mr. Müller is now partly before the public, and cannot but give him a high rank among musical professors; while his devotion to business is such as to encourage the belief that the cause of taste and knowledge in the art is safe in his hands.

The late arrival of Mr. Müller prevented the government from giving concerts at the regular and usual period; but the choir were constant in their attendance upon rehearsals, and were thus enabled to give two or three new pieces in April and May with good effect. *The Spring*, by Haydn, and the 103d Psalm, by Fesca, are among the best pieces of music ever produced at the Odeon; and the style of performance was exceedingly creditable to both choir and orchestra, showing certainly no falling off from the skill acquired in previous years, but on the contrary, a positive and decided improvement. It is particularly gratifying to be able to state this fact, as, under the circumstances, a different result might reasonably be feared, if not expected; but the zeal of the choir in learning has been as conspicuous and as honorable as the assiduity of the professors in teaching.

It would be inexcusable not to acknowledge, in this place,



the obligations of the Academy to those members of the Amateur Club who have constituted so large and effective a portion of the orchestra. Without their coöperation it would have been impossible for the Academy to have given their concerts in any thing like a proper style.

The deficiency of instruments in the orchestra is, perhaps, as great as any other want in the performances of the Academy, and the attention of the government has been directed to the best means of remedying the defect. A class of learners, on various instruments, has been organized by Mr. Schmidt, in which, if successful, the government indulge the hope that a number of well taught performers will be found who may take an interest in the labors of the Academy, and support them by their aid.

The number of persons composing the class of teachers was greater the last year than ever before ; and additional interest is given to the lectures, by the discussions of musical topics which arise in the convention that has sprung from the annual meetings of the class. It seems impossible that so large a number of persons should assemble from distant parts of the United States, all interested and skilled in the art, without benefit to themselves and to others ; and it is the wish and intention of the Academy to furnish every aid in their power, to promote the improvement of the class, and the objects of the convention. The public performances which have been given by the class, under the direction of the professors of the Academy, have possessed a high degree of interest, and the doings of both class and convention will undoubtedly become more and more interesting with the increase of numbers who shall attend, and the general progress in musical taste and knowledge.

Evidences of this progress both in this city, and in other parts of the country, are not wanting, and it is with great pleasure that the Academy contemplate the change which is taking place in the public estimate of the beauty and value

of music, especially as part of this very perceptible and desirable change may be, nay, must be in fairness attributed to their efforts. Concerts of various descriptions, and degrees of merit, have been more numerous, and have been, on an average, better attended than ever before in this community ; and though it might have been wished that some of them had been of superior style, yet a fondness for music is clearly discovered by attendance upon that which is adapted to the state of our knowledge, while discrimination and judgment are necessarily of slow growth, but will be sure to spring from the love and practice of the art. It is encouraging also to observe the formation of similar institutions, and the adoption, in other places, of the measures by which we have sought to increase the acquaintance of the public with the art of music. In Albany, Troy, and Cincinnati, Academies have been established like our own, in all important respects ; and they seem to be pursuing the same ends by the same means. They might, indeed, be termed branches of our Society, their modes of instruction being adopted from ours, and carried out by persons who had been familiar with them here. In Northampton and Pittsfield, also, Col. Barr, who has been repeatedly a member of the class of teachers, and is well known for his musical attainments, has succeeded in introducing the study of vocal music into the schools ; and this cannot fail to be regarded as *the decisive measure*, with regard to the future progress of the community in the art. In our own city, the study of vocal music has become incorporated as a regular part of the public school education, and it is gradually extending through the private schools, so that it may be presumed, that it will ere long be considered an indispensable part of elementary education. Its good effects are uniformly and strongly testified to by all the teachers who have given it a trial, and we look with confidence to the display of these effects, when those who are now learning its principles and practice shall come forward into active life.



The financial condition of the Academy has improved, in some respects, since the last year. A new lease of the Odeon, for the term of five years from the expiration of the former one, has been taken, and an arrangement which will doubtless be mutually advantageous, has been entered into with the trustee of the Lowell Institute, for the use of the Hall, which relieves the Academy at once from a portion of its debt; and with the sums to be expected from other tenants, will perhaps enable it to extinguish the remainder, by the close of the term. This will, however, depend upon the cost of concerts, and though the Academy has lost less than common by them this year, yet this is rather to be attributed to the smaller number given, than to any increase of attendance, or other cause. Another attempt will be made next winter to commence early, and to give such concerts as will enable us to determine whether it be possible to perform them without pecuniary loss; and if this be impossible, they ought, surely, to be wholly or partially discontinued, till the condition of the Academy shall be such as to enable it to defray the necessary expenses.

The performances of the Juvenile Choir have been, as heretofore, particularly pleasing and successful. The class was collected, and in the earlier part of the winter was instructed by Mr. Jonathan C. Woodman, who has formerly had charge of it, and in the latter portion of the season by Mr. A. N. Johnson; and under the faithful care of these gentlemen, it made the progress which was so pleasingly exhibited in the public performances.

The building has been put in thorough repair, both inside and outside, and the organ has been repainted, and the pipes gilded.

On the whole, then, although some of our expectations have been disappointed, and some of our labor has been in vain, during the past year, yet we have reason to look back upon much that has happened with satisfaction, and forward

without despondence. If we have lost a valued associate, we have gained the coöperation of new and efficient aid in the cause. If we have been losers by even the choice and well performed concerts which we have given, we have been able to make advantageous arrangements in other respects, which have lightened our burdens in some degree. If we have not been able to gratify the public by an extended series of concerts, we have the satisfaction of knowing that there is no diminution of our ability to give them from any falling off in the power of performance, but on the contrary, that there is an increase in the skill and zeal of the choir. We have also had the pleasure of seeing others active in the cause of music, far more so than ever before in this city, and of seeing them sustained by an increased degree of attention to the art on the part of the public. This greater attention we have been particularly desirous to produce.

Let us go on, then, with unflagging resolution, and if we find our progress slow, let us recollect that great objects are not ordinarily obtained suddenly, and that so great a one as a change in the habits and mode of thinking of a whole people, is not to be reached without perseverance for a period proportioned to its magnitude, nor without the favor of that Providence which has thus far sustained and encouraged us.





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